

Child and Family Services Policy Manual: Substitute Care for Children in Foster Care: Supervised Independent Living Services

Background The need for clarification of the Supervised Independent Living Services (SILS) has grown with the implementation of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) as outlined in Section 408-1 of the Child And Family Services Policy Manual.

Eligible Youth The Supervised Independent Living Program has been designed to meet the needs of adolescent youth between the ages of 16 to 18 who reside in foster care and can demonstrate the ability to function as a responsible youth without the supervision received in a foster care setting. These youth have shown proficiencies and abilities to effectively manage most of the skills associated with adulthood. Youth must be currently enrolled in high school, working towards a GED or already graduated. Eligible youth will also be enrolled in the CFCIP program.

Youth in the Supervised Independent Living program who are 18 and have agreed to remain in foster care until they graduate high school will have the option to remain in Foster Care for three months after they have graduated.

NOTE: This program is not to be provided to youth who are no longer in foster care. Youth who have aged-out of care or have emancipated should be referred to a CFCIP provider serving the area where the youth lives.

Referral for Services Prospective youth should have updated Casey Life Skills Assessments (CLSA) and Transitional Living Plans (TLP) to reflect current transitional goals (including participation in the SIL Program) for the youth. The TLP's are available on the OURS under CFS Forms and the Casey Assessment can be accessed at:

www.caseylifeskills.org

The youth's CPS Specialist and the regional CFCIP provider need to discuss the appropriateness of a youth for the SIL program base on the youth's demonstrated ability to succeed in Supervised Independent Living. These abilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Career and Educational Planning

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- Planning for career and postsecondary education pertinent to older youth.
- Proficiency in Schooling
- Career Preparation

2. Daily Living

- Meal planning and preparation, cleaning and food storage, home maintenance and computer and internet basics.
- Ability to find Transportation outside of Foster Care Provider

3. Household and Money Management

- Banking and credit, finding and keeping affordable housing, budgeting and living within one's means.
- Financial Proficiency in basic Household Budgeting for Clothing, Food, Rent, Household Set-Up Items, Utilities and Other bills (phone, cable, etc.)

4. Work and Study Life

- Basics of employment, addressing/resolving legal issues, study skills and time management.
- Employment (youth must at least have a part-time job or the ability to begin working once SIL begins).
- Participation in Chafee Program (including current TLP and Casey Assessment)
- Participation in NYTD Survey (if applicable)

5. Self Care

- Health Education (maintaining personal hygiene and health related appointments, seeking assistance for physical, dental, and mental health needs)

6. Relationships and Communication

- Developing and sustaining healthy relationships, cultural competency and permanent connections with caring adults.

7. Permanency

- Embedded within all of the skill areas of the Casey Assessment are 20 items that assess a youth's connection to trusted adults, community of support and overall interdependent connections. It is recommended that practitioners pay attention to these areas as young people need a strong safety net of support as they learn the skills they need to move to young adulthood.

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8. Looking Forward

- Youth's level of confidence and internal feelings important to their success.

SIL Approval Team An extended team approach should be incorporated in working with the youth (i.e. CPS Specialist, CFCIP provider, Extended Family Members, SIL Program provider, Permanency Team,). The team should discuss the benefits of enrollment of a prospective youth at this time, and discuss how the youth could benefit from the program. The skill set of the youth will dictate the level of support needed in order for the youth to be successful in this program. Youth with greater needs will require more supports from everyone involved. It is the responsibility of the CPS Specialist to assure the necessary supports are provided and readily available to the youth.

Before a placement is approved, a Youth Centered Meeting (YCM), including CPS staff and the regional CFCIP Provider, should be held to engage the youth in the process and a Permanency Team meeting should be held to determine if it is appropriate for the youth to participate in the SIL Program. (More about this process is outlined below.)

Interested and appropriate youth will obtain an SIL Program Application from the CPS Specialist. The completed SIL Program Application is reviewed by the CPS Specialist and CPS Supervisor. Signed approval of the application by the Regional Administrator is required. A youth who turns 18 and expecting to stay in Foster Care until high school graduation must also agree to sign the extension agreement with their CPS Specialist to remain in foster care. The extension agreement can be found on the DPHHS website.

[Youth Application for Supported Independent Living Services](#)

Once a youth, CFSD, and CFCIP staff agree that a SIL placement would be beneficial to the youth, goals are established in the YCM to develop a SIL plan. The plan must describe the youth's appropriateness for participation in SIL and how SIL will help the youth achieve a successful transition from foster care (the SIL plan becomes the basis for the youth's Transition Plan).

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The FGDM Coordinator or CPS Specialist will make a referral for a Youth Centered Meeting (YCM). The goals of this meeting include, but are not limited to:

1. To formalize SIL as a solid plan for the youth, including specific steps for the youth to “*succeed*” into the program;
2. Incorporate discussion of the Casey Assessment and TLP to identify specific skill sets where the youth may need additional assistance;
3. To identify the youth’s (non-paid/non professional) support system, including as many family members as possible. This needs to cover the time when the youth is in the SIL Program and the final TLP for the youth after the youth transitions out of care. **This also includes obtaining Medicaid for the SIL youth as they will no longer be eligible for Foster Care Medicaid through the OPA. Medicaid will need to be obtained through the OPA, which could take up to 45 days from application for Medicaid; and**
4. Identify and Implement a youth specific safety/crisis plan that includes a list of contacts and telephone numbers of persons to call or contact when needed. Both the youth and all of those involved within the team should have this list with each team member assuming responsibility to assist the youth in safety/crisis planning situations including, but not limited to:
 - Legal Issues
 - Employment
 - Education
 - Health Related
 - Relationships
 - Financial
 - Daily Living
 - Future Planning

This should also include situations when the child can “fall back” into living in foster care placement when emergency situations exist without revocation of a youth from program and define situations that will result in revocation from the program.

It is important to have as much support of the team as possible, as well as gaining team member’s perspective of concerns ahead of time. Strong team work & support is a key component to the success of a youth’s participation in this program.

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Supervised Independent Living Placement

Prior to placement in SIL the plan developed from the YCM described above must be approved by the Permanency Team.

Once the plan is approved by the Permanency Team an SIL agreement can be entered into with a local service provider to supervise the placement, and provide transitional services as directed. The SIL Program Provider will begin working with the youth to locate affordable housing in the local community. The SIL Program Provider will work with the youth up to 30 days prior to housing being located, which is billable using the SCSMD billing code in CAPS. The youth will be advised regarding a rental agreement, deposit, household setup, given a list of emergency and key contact numbers to be posted in the youth's apartment along with any other necessary SILS information. (The CPS Specialist, CPS Supervisor, and/or regional CFCIP Provider may also participate in assisting with locating a suitable rental and other needs described above).

Once available and affordable housing is located, the SIL Program provider needs to complete the Habitability Checklist to ensure that potential housing is safe and appropriate for the youth. The Habitability Checklist will be completed prior to signing the rental agreement by the SIL Program provider and CPS Specialist. The SIL Program provider then works with the youth to secure the apartment AND completes all necessary agreements to secure affordable housing. The Habitability Checklist can be found on the DPHHS website.

[Habitability Checklist](#)

A Supported Independent Living Services Agreement will be negotiated between the SIL Program provider, the CFCIP Provider, and CPS Specialist and signed by the SIL Program representative, the CFCIP Provider, the CPS Supervisor and the youth that outlines the associate costs, services to be provided, and duration of the SILS Agreement. Note that some stipend requests under the CFCIP Program (housing, rent, etc.) will not be offered by the CFCIP Program if a youth is participating in the SIL Program. The Supported Independent Living Services Agreement can be found on the DPHHS website.

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[Supported Independent Living Services Agreement](#)

It is expected that follow-up YCM's will occur in 2-3 months (or more frequently as needed) to reassess the youth's progress & needs. Follow-Up/Support/Skill Building through the extended team members should happen as needed to support the youth in the SIL setting. An exit plan shall also be developed as a youth moves into the SIL Program and updated as needed in each YCM and updated on the youths Transitional Living Plan every six months or earlier as needed.